



VILLA DI MASER

World Heritage

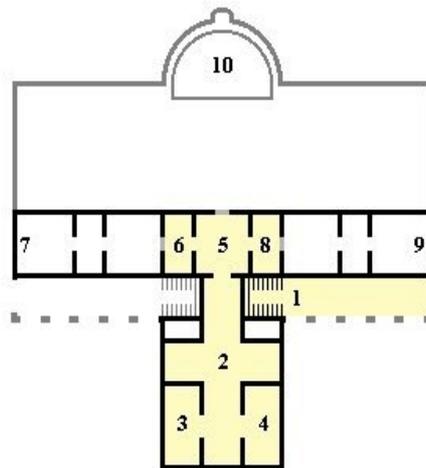


The Villa was built between 1550 and 1560 by **Andrea Palladio** for **Daniele Barbaro**, Patriarch of Aquileia, and his brother **Marcantonio** Ambassador of the Venetian Republic, transforming the medieval palace of Maser into a splendid country residence, masterpiece of the Venetian Renaissance. **Paolo Veronese** decorated the Villa with his vastest and most important cycle of frescoes, while **Alessandro Vittoria**, brilliant pupil of Sansovino, cured the stuccos.

The Villa passed by marriage from the Barbaro to the Trevisan, to the Basadonna, finally to the family of Ludovico Manin, the last Doge of Venice. In 1838, the Manin sold it to Gian Battista Colferai, who had been renting it as a country residence, but his daughters, suspicious of each other, not wanting to invest in a propriety individed within the family, let the Villa go into complete ruin. In 1850 the industrialist Sante Giacomelli bought it and completely restaured and rennovated it, with the assistance of artists like Zanotti and Moretto Larese. In 1934 Carlo Giacomelli sold it to Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata, and the Villa became the home of his daughter Marina who continued with immense care and love the works of restauration throughout the years. Her daughter now lives in it with her family.

GUIDE TO THE VISIT

1. Entrance portico
 2. The Crociform hall
 3. Room of Bacchus
 4. Room of the Tribunal of Love
 5. Olympus
 6. Room of the Little Dog
 7. Portrait of Elena Caliarì
 8. Room of the Oil-Lamp
 9. Paolo Veronese's self-portrait
 10. Nynphaeum
-  Rooms open to the public



2. "CROCIERA" OR CRUCIFORM HALL

The six illusionistic landscapes had been covered in 1850-52 by different paintings more in tune with the fashion of the time. Uncovered in 1934, the four landscapes towards the central balcony were reconstructed, while of the two near the entrance stairways one was left to testify the conditions in which it was discovered, the other was restaured more respectfully. They are imaginary views onto landscapes of classical antiquity, as idealized pendants to the real view through the balconies. Lances, halberds and flags with the arms of the barbaro family are grouped in the corners.

Eight figures of feminine musicians play in niches. Underneath them are medallion shaped decorations with mounted figures. A man-servant and a little girl greet us coming through open doors.

On the left a bronze portrait of Count Giuseppe Volpi di Misurata by Antonio Berti.

On the keystones two masks by Vittoria. The one facing north a portrait of Palladio.

3. ROOM OF BACCHUS

Vault: Bacchus instructing shepards in the use of grape.

On the walls: landscapes. Vine branches climb behind the cornices to reappear above them full of grapes.

Chimneypiece by Alessandro Vittoria, and, above, allegories of Avarice, with the key in his hand, and Abundance. Above the door: Apollo and Venus.

Lateral walls with trompe-l'oeil: columns precede niches with statues and portraits in the corners. The bases of the columns are decorated with false marbles and medallions with monochromatic figures.

In the cornes of the lunettes, above, allegorical animals.

4. ROOM OF THE TRIBUNAL OF LOVE

Vault: The Tribunal of Love. The young Bride with her Husband and her Defender is heard by the Judge, who has the fasces in his right hand, and is flanked by Truth and Oblivion.

On the walls: landscapes with fruit tree and vine branches that climb towards the vault.

Chimneypiece by Alessandro Vittoria, and, above, three players symbolize Harmony.

Above the door The Riches of the Barbaro family. Their arms, red circle on white, are engraved on the vases.

Lateral walls with trompe-l'oeil: the illusion is strengthened by the corner of a stool and the figure of a dog that appear from behind the bases of the columns. Here too, painted marbles with medallion shaped monochromatic decorations and in the cornes of the lunettes, above, allegorical animals.

On the right, by the window, a pair of shoes and a brush left by the painter.

5. "L'OLIMPO" HALL OF THE OLYMPIAN GODS

At the balcony dressed in blue Giustina Barbaro Giustinian, the wife of Marcantonio, greets her guests with the nurse and the three sons.

Above them in the corners the four elements: Vulcan or Fire, Cybele or Earth, Neptune or Water, and Juno or Air. Between them, in monochromatic representations, Abundance with the cornucopia, Fertility, Fortune with the wheel, and Love.

In the octagonal centre the Universal Harmony surrounded by the Gods of the Olympus: Jupiter with the eagle, Mars, Apollo with the cithar, Venus, Mercury with the caduceus, Diana with the dogs, and Saturn.

Among the clouds close to the cornice the signs of the zodiac.

Lunette above the door to the garden: Summer and Autumn.

Lunette above the entrance to the Crociera: Winter and Spring.

On the walls ideal and romantic landscapes. In the one on the right below Mrs. Barbaro the Villa di Maser.

6. ROOM OF THE LITTLE DOG

Vault: Fortune, master of the world, denies the riches to Ambition trying to steal them, while Envy is plotting in the shadow hiding a dagger under the garments.

Below them, Fortune crowns Merit, ...even if asleep.

Above the door to the Olympus: Time and History.

Lateral wall: trompe-l'oeil with columns. Below the landscape at the centre a little dog is sitting. Above, in the shell shaped lunette, S. Catherine hands a dove to the Child. S. Joseph and S. Catherine were the Saints patrons of the Barbaro family.

Bronze portrait of Marina Volpi di Misurata by Antonio Berti.

Beyond the door closed by the glass, her study with frescoes by Zelotti and chimneypiece by Vittoria. In the distance a lady with a fan, maybe Elena Caliarì, Paolo Veronese's wife (n. 7 in the plan).

8. ROOM OF THE OIL-LAMP

Vault: God the Father mysterious among the clouds watches over Faith, with the chalice in her hand and the Bible at her feet, who is indicating the way towards Eternity to Charity leading the Sinner while stepping on precious jewels in contempt.

Beside them a putto holds the ever-burning oil-lamp of the house.

Above the doors: Strength (with the cudgel) leans on the Truth (with the mirror), and, opposite to them, Virtue restrains the Passion.

Lateral wall with trompe-l'oeil and a landscape. In the lunette Our Lady of the Soup.

Beyond the door closed with the glass, the study of Count Enrico Luling Buschetti with frescoes by Zelotti and chimneypiece by Vittoria. In the distance the presumed self-portrait of Paolo Veronese in hunting costume (n. 9 in the plan).

10. THE NINPHEUM

In the niches statues by assistants of Vittoria portraying divinities of the Olympus and of the woods. The four splendid giants are attributed to Marcantonio Barbaro, an amateur sculptor himself.

At the end of the grotto a fresh-water divinity. From his jug gushes water from the source that used to supply the whole Villa, the fountains and the fields. In rainy seasons the source is still active.